The Narrative:
Building and Maintaining Dominance in the Information Environment

LtCol Scott D. McDonald
Chief, Communication Plans & Integration Branch
Office of U. S. Marine Corps Communication

The Overall Classification of this brief is: **UNCLASSIFIED**

A Jumping Off Point…

- **Mission:**

  The Office of U.S. Marine Corps Communication (OUSMCC) provides communication counsel to the Commandant and Headquarters Marine Corps and develops *Service-level policy, doctrine, guidance, plans, and products* IOT enable Marine Corps' operations in *support of specified interests* in an evolving information environment.

- **What Does that mean?**
  - We are the CMC's messaging team
  - We assist the CMC in building the Marine Corps Narrative
  - Disseminate communication guidance to the wider Marine Corps
  - Advise and assist HQMC offices in crafting communication to support the narrative

Where Do We Go From Here?

- **Historically, there has not been a narrative…or a process**
  - A collection of documents and ideas
  - A collection of people writing speeches for different things
  - A collection of offices deciding where to engage

- **Routine narrative development in cycle with CMC battle rhythm**
  - Summer – OPT, Drafting, and Review
  - September – PUBLISH A PLAN!
    - A top-level source for what we want to say, to whom, in what manner, to what effect
    - Disseminate to HQ, Operating Forces, and Supporting Establishment
  - Fall – Support to CMC engagement planning
  - Winter & Spring – Refinements support for Testimony Prep and Testimony
  - Weekly
    - Staffing of products in weekly cycle keeps narrative language on the tip of HQMC tongues
    - Vetting Invitations so the CMC talks to the right people
    - Planning trips so the CMC goes to the right places

Building the Narrative

Top Level Guidance

- Title X
- Commandant's Planning Guidance of January 2015
- FragO 1: Advance to Contact
- FragO 2?

Communication Stakeholders

- OUSMCC
- Office of Legislative Affairs
- Plans, Policy, & Operations
  - International Affairs Branch
  - Strategy Branch (Security Cooperation)
- Deputy Commandants and Directorates
- Commandant's Staff Group
- Strategic Initiatives Group
- **The Fleet and Supporting Establishment**

Key Audiences

- **Why Not Publics?**
  - JDN 2-13 Communication Synchronization
  - JP 3-13 Information Operations
  - JP 3-61 Public Affairs
  - MCRP 3-33.7A – Multi-service TTPs for ComCam Operations
- **The Audiences**
  - Our Marines
  - Congress
  - Department of the Navy
  - Department of Defense & the Administration
  - Foreign Nations
  - Industry
  - Veteran Support Organizations & Military Communities
- **Influencers**
  - Think Tanks
  - Media
  - Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) Boards

The Narrative

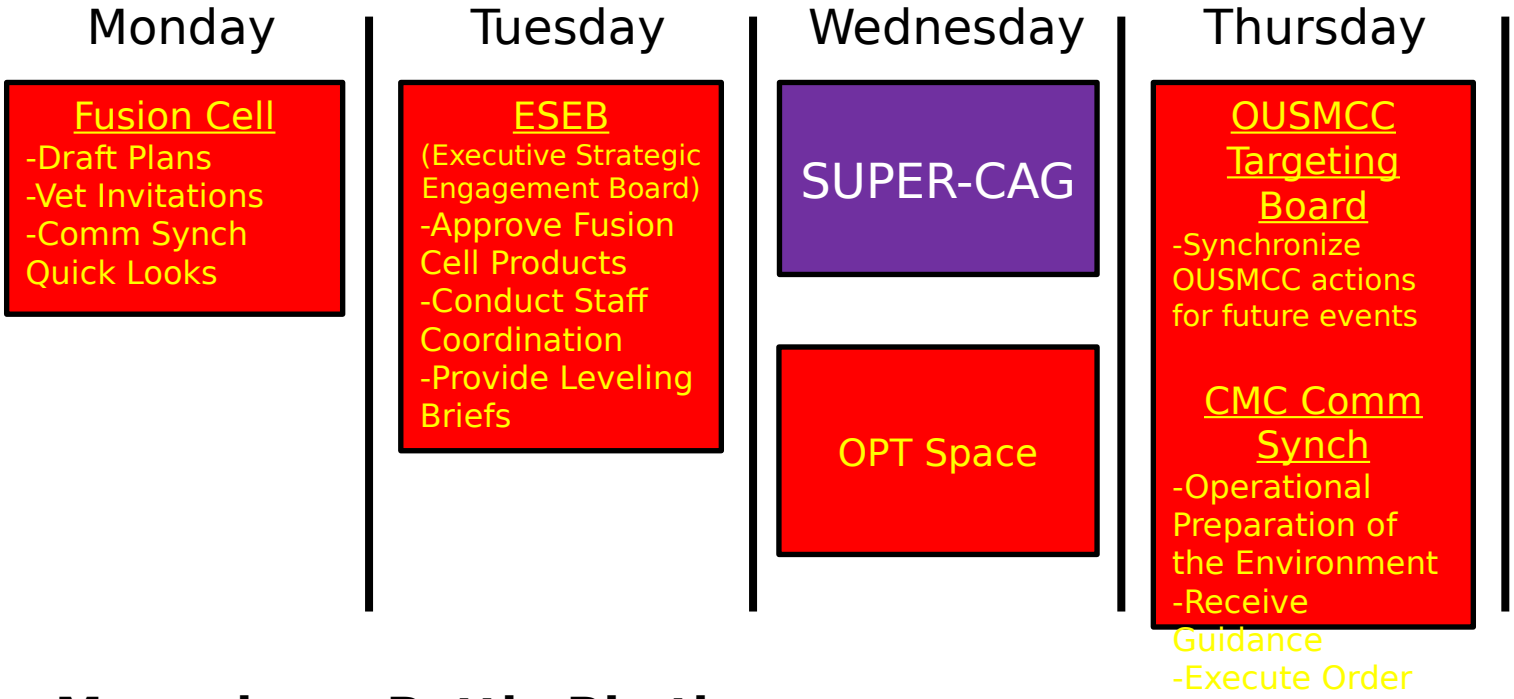
- The United States Marine Corps is the nation's ***Naval Expeditionary Force in Readiness***.
- We maintain and improve this capability by investing in the Commandant's five focus areas:
  - People – *Our Center of Gravity* – The Marine Corps recruits the best people, then invests in them, grows them as Marines, and return to the civilian populace as better citizens
  - Training – The Marine Corps invests in realistic, challenging training across the range of military operations
  - Readiness – The Marine Corps aligns the best training, with the most relevant and well maintained equipment to be ready to respond now
  - Naval Integration – The Marine Corps is a naval service. All of our operations must be integrated with the Navy and support the objectives of the Naval Campaign to protect US interests through the projection of expeditionary power.
  - Modernization – The Marine Corps stays ahead of our adversaries by ensuring we leverage the latest in technology, doctrine, and learning.
- By continuing sound, responsible investment across these focus areas, the Marine Corps is able to keep trained, ready Marines forward deployed and meet the charge by the 82nd Congress to be ***"most ready when the nation is least ready."***

How do you use the Narrative?

- **Treat every engagement like a target**
  - If it is important to use the Commandant's time, it has to have an effect
    - Task
    - Purpose
    - Method
    - Endstate (effect)
  - That effect must relate to at lest one of the CMC's key audiences and at least one of his focus areas.
  - If you cannot use an engagement this way, the Commandant should not do it

- **How do you do this on a HQ Staff?**
  - Buy in from the leadership
  - Establish a process
  - Make it a habit
  - Make yourself indispensable

A Headquarters Process



Managing a Battle Rhythm

- Make Communication Synchronization routine
- Provide a process for rapidly coordinating, deconflicting, and staffing initiatives
- Keep staff directorates tied in to service-level communication planning

Examples

- **Trip planning**
  - Linking opportunities together
    - Making opportunities easy
    - Getting the CMC to where we need him in time effective manner
  - Layering messages on those opportunities
  - Leveraging Digital Media to prep CMC for questions
  - Example: AFCEA-West
    - San Francisco – Sen Feinstein
    - Silicon Valley – DIUX
    - Lancaster – General Atomics
    - North Island – F-18 Depot
    - AFCEA – Congress and influencers

- **Comm Synch Quick Looks**
  - Task, Purpose, Method, Endstate
  - Effects by Audience
  - Messages couched in CMC focus areas
  - Produced for CMC, other GOs, NCR Tours, Marines executing ComRel, etc.

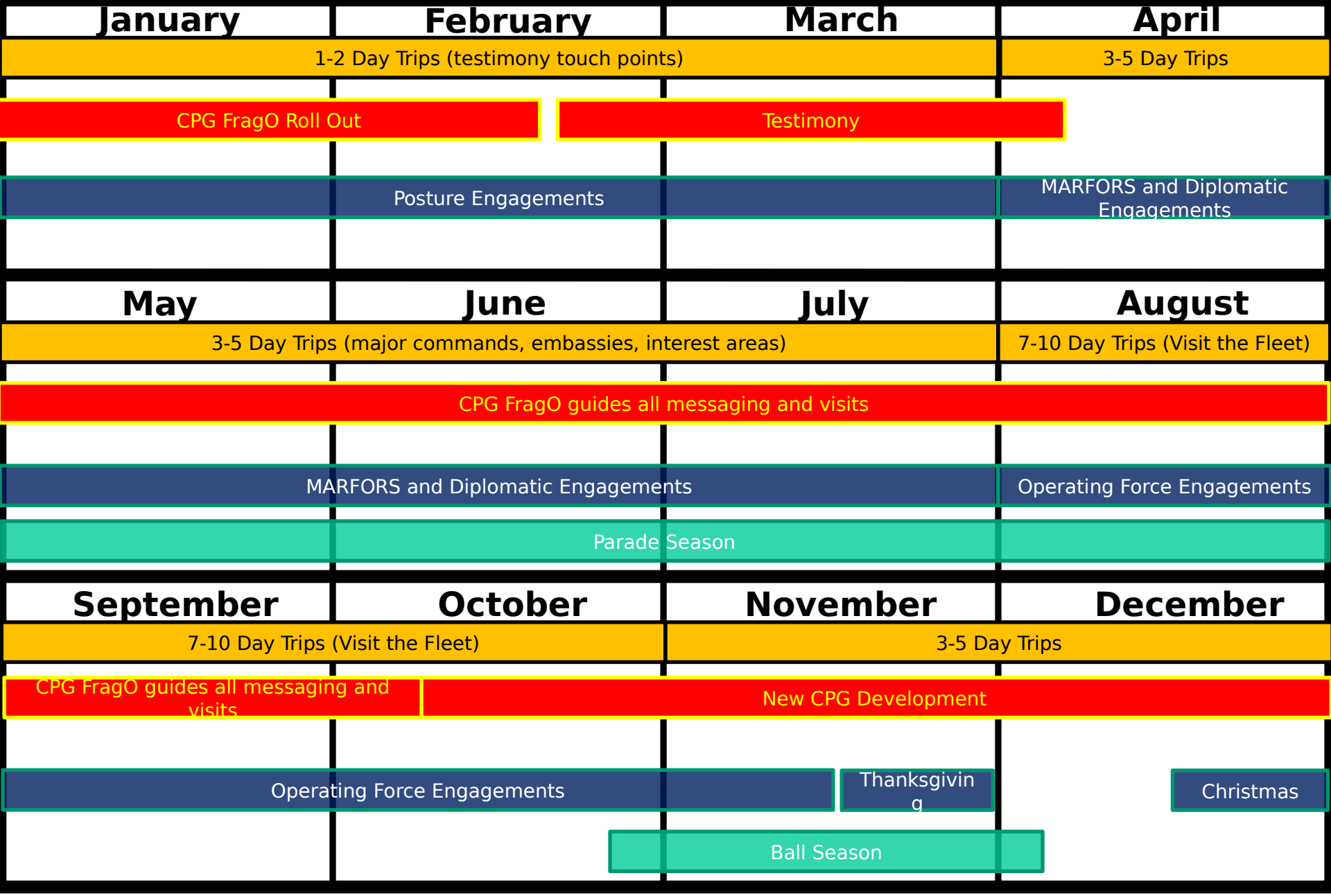
Your Role

- **Provide input to the narrative**
  - Partly on OUSMCC to ensure you are tied in
  - Annual Communication Synchronization plan will be staffed in coming weeks
    - Do messages resonate differently in your part of the world?
    - Are we missing big events that could be leveraged?

- **Advocate for the narrative at home**
  - Ensure Communication planning is part of Operations
  - Shape the language to support CMC themes
  - Help the G3 tell a story

The Narrative

- The United States Marine Corps is the nation's ***Naval Expeditionary Force in Readiness***.
- We maintain and improve this capability by investing in the Commandant's five focus areas:
  - People – *Our Center of Gravity* – The Marine Corps recruits the best people, then invests in them, grows them as Marines, and return to the civilian populace as better citizens
  - Training – The Marine Corps invests in realistic, challenging training across the range of military operations
  - Readiness – The Marine Corps aligns the best training, with the most relevant and well maintained equipment
  - Naval Integration – The Marine Corps is a naval service. All of our operations must be integrated with the Navy and support the objectives of the Naval Campaign to protect US interests through the projection of expeditionary power.
  - Modernization – The Marine Corps stays ahead of our adversaries by ensuring we leverage the latest in technology, doctrine, and learning.
- By continuing sound, responsible investment across these focus areas, the Marine Corps is able to keep trained, ready Marines forward deployed and meet the charge by the 82nd Congress to be ***"most ready when the nation is least ready."***



Legend: Travel Type Messaging Engagements MC Functions